2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

178 staple grains to grow marketable vegetables for cash instead.[18]
241 Whether their diet had improved is not clear. By the Second World
War a mere 3% of the entire Nilgiri population subsisted primarily
(433) on millets; the other 97% depended on purchased rice (Krishna-
swami, 1947, 464). Coffee was not a successful crop in most parts of
the plateau, and much of that plantation land was later given over
(245) to tea. This, together with the development of Badaga tea
plantations from about 1925 onward, accounts for the great
increase in tea acreage over the thirty-five year period covered in
Table 2 (Ranga, 1934, 18–22).

The plantation crops called for more expertise than Badagas
245 could usually muster and so were mostly confined to European
land-holdings; even so, some Badagas were growing tea and a
(241) little coffee in the late 1920s (Ranga, 1934, 2). But potato was
(654) relatively easy to cultivate, especially as a government farm in the
district helped them with seed, fertilizers and technical advice.
During the past fifty years some of the more enterprising Badagas
(mainly those able to obtain financial credit) have successfully
cultivated tea and coffee on estates both large and small, though
this was initially a ruse of theirs to increase the value of their land
before selling it to Europeans.[19]

242 Chemical fertilizers were first used sporadically in the early
(241) 1920s; before that only cow-dung and human refuse had been
available (Shortt & Ouchterlony, 1868, 44; Grigg, 1880, 468;
Ranga, 1934, 14). These chemicals led to much higher yields in the
European vegetable crops and helped confirm the belief that
growing food for the market was a profitable occupation. Im-
proved seeds, notably potato, and insecticides were also adopted
by the Badagas (Nambiar, 1965, 23), who were 'always willing to
test any new method of cultivation, or new crops brought to their
notice by the Nilgiri Horticultural Society' (Thurston, 1909, vol. I,
76, quoting from *Pioneer*, 4 Oct. 1907).

241 The adoption of fertilizer, insecticide and good seed was soon
242 followed by construction of more terraces on some of the sloping
fields. Progress in terracing, however, was much slower than the
adoption of other innovations because it demanded a greater
capital outlay than many farmers could afford; and most did not
possess more than a quarter-hectare of land. Even today some
cultivated slopes that badly need terracing because of soil erosion
(654) remain unterraced. It is worth noting that in the past several
decades the situation has much improved because of the state

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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178 increasingly valuable to the Badagas because of rising grain prices (Mandelbaum, 1955, 240).

426 423 For many Badagas with small land-holdings the transitional period between the two World Wars was marked by the frustrations of indebtedness. Pieces of their land were sometimes sold to non-Badagas in order to pay off outstanding debts—a previously inconceivable practice. Some men went as far as the Annamalai Hills for manual labouring. Badaga debtors did, however, work hard to produce profitable cash crops or at least to buy back some of their former lands (Thurston, 1909, vol. I, 64; Ranga, 1934, 4; Vivekanandam Pillai, 1937, 249).

178 241 433 With the First World War, major changes in their marketing practices became apparent. Tea, coffee and cinchona, like potato, presuppose a market beyond the Nilgiris, which in turn presupposes adequate transportation. The crucial demand for vegetables to feed the numerous European troops in India, Burma, Malaya and Ceylon stimulated the change in crops documented above (see Table 2). Similar conditions arose again in the Second World War [439] and prompted many more Badagas to try commercial farming. On each occasion cultivators took the risk of exporting potatoes and other vegetables to new and remote markets, and some made handsome profits (Francis, 1908, 167). The risks in this enterprise were real, for men could recall occasions when floods broke the road or rail connections or the goods reached their destination only [177] after market prices had fallen heavily. The rewards of potato cultivation were, however, of critical importance in lifting the yoke of indebtedness: during World War II the British made a great deal of capital available to Badaga farmers, as part of the 'Grow More Food' campaign. This finance and the profits from selling their highly priced potatoes did more than any cooperative loan facility to relieve the indebtedness that Badagas had been suffering under for several decades.

245 While tea and coffee yield a higher profit per hectare than potatoes or grains, they are more susceptible to disease than the millets and require greater agricultural skill than all other Nilgiri crops if they are to attain the standards required by wholesale purchasing agents. Moreover they need to be produced in large enough quantity to warrant the processing and transportation to [442] Bombay (since 1940, to Cochin). Middlemen, both Badagas and others, were therefore indispensable to the few Badaga tea and coffee growers of the 1920s and 1930s. Middlemen could act as a

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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control on quality and could bring together sufficient produce to make a transaction with an exporter worthwhile. As more and more Badagas became interested in growing cash crops, middlemen appeared not only to buy up small quantities of tea, coffee and potato but also to sell seed, fertilizer and even some insurance.

After Independence profiteering by the middlemen was largely checked by the Nilgiri Cooperative Marketing Society set up with state government aid (Vivekanandam Pillai, 1937, 249). Today there are nearly two hundred cooperative societies in the Nilgiris which pool the resources of members and also supply cheap fertilizer. Many such societies own local tea-processing factories and warehouses and are dominated by Badagas. After 1957 heavy loss through potato disease caused a widespread shift to tea or coffee growing,[22] and in the 1970s large acreages have been devoted to growing a sturdy new German variety of cabbage which finds markets nation-wide. Both tea and cabbage are quite successful crops. The availability of help from the Central Cooperative Bank made these unexpected switches in crops possible, for otherwise the initial capital outlay and the small size of most estates would have rendered the new venture unfeasible. Several cottage industries have also helped diversify the rural economy over the past thirty years; in particular beekeeping, liquor distilling, milk sales, knitting and embroidery have provided new, regular sources of income for many hundreds of Badaga families.

The early twentieth century saw the rise not only of wealthy Badaga land-owners but also of large-scale labour contractors. A few men profitted by getting the contracts for gangs to dig pits for planting tea-cuttings, pick coffee-beans, build roads or construct public buildings in the district.[23] Less wealthy Badagas set themselves up as small shopkeepers, tailors or money-lenders or found work in a wide variety of urban trades.[24] Whenever possible the more resourceful reinvested their profits in land (Ranga, 1934, 10), either tea and coffee estates or farm plots formerly belonging to Kotas (Mandelbaum, 1955, 240). The other reinvestment commonly made was in college education for their sons. With the economy fully monetized the stress was now on providing stability for the coming generations.

MODERN EMPLOYMENT

Prior to World War I virtually all Badagas were cultivators, and

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

was mostly in steep rocky places ill-suited to any cultivation.)

14. Grigg, 1880, 321, mentions there were 29,912 acres (12,105 ha.) of farming land on the plateau in 1862–1863 but considers this 'a fictitious number'. Fifteen years earlier Ouchterlony had estimated that the Badagas alone used 12,750 ha.; Grigg, 1880, 13.

15. It is 19 km. by road from Ootacamund and embraces the Badaga commune of So:lu:ru.

16. That Sholur was not atypical in this respect is suggested by the fact that in 1867 the average number of persons per Badaga household for the entire district was 4.36; Shortt & Ouchterlony, 1868, 61.

17. Land utilization figures for the entire district, 1905–1960, in Nambiar (1965), do not isolate the role of Badaga agriculture.

18. Ranga, 1934, 68. As early as 1908 Francis (p. 167) noted: 'Potatoes are much exported to Ceylon, the Straits [Malaya] and Burma . . .' It was in 1908 that the railway connecting Ootacamund with the plains was completed.

19. Ranga, 1934, 14–15, 18–22. 'In fact many planters advance money to Badagas to enable them to dig pits and plant tea . . . with the intention of being able to purchase that land'; Ranga, 1934, 15.

20. Merchants also granted credit for purchase of daily needs—at much inflated prices; Ranga, 1934, 73–74; Vivekanandam Pillai, 1937, 249. Such traders are an excellent example of Simmel's 'resident stranger', whose presence catalyses a peasant economy by affording credit; Simmel, 1923, 509–512.

21. De:vaso:le, Kolekombe, Se:las, Gudalu:ru, Manju:ru, Ki:kotagiri, Nedugula, and Naduvatta; Baikie, 1857, 38, 88; Grigg, 1880, 471.

22. Nambiar, 1965, 23. The first time this problem beset Badaga farmers was in 1880; B.E.M.S., 1880, no. 41, 37; Grigg, 1880; 134.

23. Ranga, 1934, 7–9. Badaga contractors had been involved in such work since the mid-nineteenth century; McPherson, 1870, 21.

24. Natesa Sastri, 1892, 753; Francis, 1908, 129; Thurston, 1909, vol. I, 63; Ranga, 1934, 8; Vivekanandam Pillai, 1937, 248. These jobs included builders, blacksmiths, brickmakers, carpenters, clerks, domestic servants, painters, gardeners, washermen, teachers, printers, forest guards, tailors, barbers, water-carriers, stone-breakers, rickshaw-pullers, and even coolies and scavengers.

25. Jagor, 1876, 201–202; unlike most Hindus the Badagas do not employ washermen.

26. These were mainly Christians.

27. The categories are taken from the 1961 *Census of India*.

28. The designation is not recent: Francis, 1908, 265. On the Backward Classes generally, see Béteille, 1969, 87–145. Very recently the Nilgiri Hill Tribe Badaga Welfare Association was formed to promote government action in classifying Badagas as Scheduled Tribe, which would have material advantages for the community.

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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(2) The lower plateau, ranging from about 5,000 to a peak at 8,640 feet, where over 350 Badaga hamlets are located. (3) The escarpments and lower slopes, primarily the home of the Kurumba and Iruḷa tribes, who are swidden cultivators still practising some hunting and gathering, and important to Badagas for their sorcery. (4) The more westerly Waina:ḍ Plateau, averaging about 3,000 feet in elevation, which is the territory of Kurumbas, Paniyas, Maunta:-dan and Waina:ḍ Chettis, and of eight hamlets of Badagas, here known as Waina:ḍ Gaudas. Irrigated rice, and tea and coffee, are the most important crops there today.

Since the culture of the Waina:ḍ Gaudas has been dealt with elsewhere (Ranga 1934; Hockings 1979a), and in any case is more like a variant subculture of the Maunta:dan Chettis than like that of the Nilgiri Badagas, I will pay no attention to them in the present study, but confine myself to the Badagas of the Nilgiri Massif.

The environs of these Nilgiri Badagas have been discussed in some detail in a paper on Badaga placenames and cultural ecology (Hockings 1974), and have been accurately described in the following account of the lower and upper plateau:

> The plateau is a true tableland, its average height being very uniform. But there is not a square mile of level ground in the whole of it, its surface being broken by endless undulations which in places swell into considerable and distinct ranges. It rises most abruptly from the plains below it; and on the west. . .its sides are often sheer, bare walls, hundreds of feet in height and too steep even for trees to obtain a footing on them. Elsewhere dense forest covers almost the whole of its slopes.
>
> It is first of all divided east and west into two fairly equal but dissimilar parts by a range of heights running north and south of which Dodabetta ('big mountain') is the tallest. . . .
>
> East and south of the Dodabetta range. . . the plateau. . .is extensively cultivated by the immigrant tribe known as the Badagas. This does not improve its appearance; the great forests have mostly been felled and their place taken by the poorest low scrub or by fields of miserable cereals surrounding the squat red-tiled houses of numerous hamlets; the country is deeply scoured by every shower of rain until the infertile red and yellow sub-soil clays are laid bare; and, owing to the Badagas' former custom of

with mixed plants are also maintained, but these gardens may be miles away from their owners' houses and on outer Nilgiri slopes. Because land is divided equally among sons upon a father's death, extensive land fragmentation has taken place. To prevent further fragmentation, there is now a tendency for sons to share and jointly manage land. Communal pastures are close enough to permit the keeping of livestock in communities. Individually owned and communal plots covered with acacia, eucalyptus, and temperate fruit trees now occur near Badaga communities. Due to intensive or slowly continued tempera·· forest clearance, only a few small remnant patches of natural fore main on the slopes near many hamlets and villages.

The outstanding features of Badaga hamlets and villages are the house-rows with compacted earth courtyards edged by low walls (Figure 17). House rows within a single community usually parallel each other and are frequently aligned in an easterly-westerly direction, but on flatter terrain they may surround a courtyard on two sides. Because the Badagas consider it sinful to throw waste water toward the sun, Lord Shiva's emblem, through alignment of houses in an easterly-westerly direction housewives may throw waste water through the back door or over the front courtyard wall without throwing it toward the sun. One dwelling within a community house-row is set apart as a confinement place for menstruating women or women undergoing a postnatal pollution period. In addition to dwellings, house-like temples are built into house-rows. Grain is threshed and agricultural produce or firewood is dried on the courtyards. These also serve as playgrounds for children, as sites for performance of ceremonial rites, and as dance arenas

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241 of 20,600 acres in the main season and 2,400 acres in the lesser (Rao
311 and Azariah 1953: 69; Krishnamurthi 1953: 193; Madras Department of
Agriculture 1960-61: single page). The production of the 1960-61
433 potato crop was approximately 61,900 tons and 7,060 tons. Most pota-
439 toes are shipped to Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, and other parts of India
via Mettupalaiyam city at the base of the Nilgiris (Figure 1).

175 Despite increased potato production on dry fields and the eat-
241 ing of imported rice by Badagas, most early 1800 cereals continue to
439 be cultivated on dry fields. Cereals raised mainly for home consump-
tion also enter local markets. Produce from old commercial plants,
excluding poppies, is still sold locally and on the plains. These
plants are grown with "English" vegetables in kitchen gardens. Apart
from potatoes, other "English" vegetables (Table III)--cabbages and
175 carrots for example--are sometimes raised as dry field crops. Fruit
245 trees originating from nectarine, peach, and plum plants introduced
before 1836 (Table III) and Chinese pears introduced in 1846 (Price
1908: 125) are grown in Badaga orchards. Mandarin oranges grown in
439 multilayer gardens are also of some commercial importance. Badagas
have taken advantage of ready markets for fruit and "English" vege-
tables. Since completion of the railroad to Ootacamund in 1908,
European and Indian families scattered over India have purchased,
through agents, baskets of fruit and "English" vegetables sent out at
periodic intervals from the Nilgiris. On market days produce from
Badaga landholdings is displayed and sold in the Coonoor, Kotagiri,
(245) Ootacamund, and smaller markets. A few Badagas use their kitchen
gardens to grow introduced berries (Table III), and strawberries in

439 particular are sold by vendors who wait near entrances into the main
[245] stores in Coonoor, Kotagiri, and Ootacamund.

Long after the introduction of tea before 1836 (Table III) and
245 coffee in 1838 (Athrey 1953: 11), enterprising Badagas turned to coffee
(475) and tea planting. Ranga (1934: 19-21) recorded these facts concerning
[433] their earlier tea planting: During a single week in 1928 a European
[439] planter purchased 17,000 pounds of green tea leaf from Badagas. Be-
(311) tween 1928 and 1930 Badagas in four communities increased their tea acreages to approximately 400 acres. By 1934 a Badaga woman managed a tea nursery, and a Kotagiri tea planter was purchasing all the tea leaf he could obtain from Badagas. In the 1960 Planting Directory over 100 Badagas are listed as coffee and tea growers. Their holdings range in size from six acres of tea to a tea garden with 190 acres of tea and a factory or from 15 acres of coffee to a garden with 158 acres of arabica coffee and 59 acres of tea (United Planters Association of Southern India 1960: 38-81). According to the tentative definition of a plantation used in this study (Appendix A), the two largest gardens would qualify as plantations--and are the only listed Badaga holdings with such large dimensions. Tea leaf from many listed and a much larger number of smaller unlisted holdings is processed in nearby company factories, or in small factories owned by Badagas or Lingayats.

Acacia and eucalyptus trees were first grown on the Nilgiris before 1836 (Table III). Badagas have since planted many acacias and eucalypti on land in and between their communities. From these trees are obtained acacia bark for tannin, eucalyptus oil, and firewood.

Gardens. Multilayer gardens owned by a few Badagas are mostly located in valleys below 6,000 feet and on outer Nilgiri slopes. They are usually some distance away from Badaga hamlets or villages. Coffee is frequently grown with jack, lime, and mandarin orange trees, but a few other plants grown in Irula and Kurumba multilayer gardens may also be raised. Badaga single layer coffee gardens occur in localities similar to those with multilayer gardens, but their single layer tea gardens are now scattered over the entire region utilized by upper Nilgiri Badagas. The tea gardens near to or far from communities may now be considered a typical part of the Badaga occupance pattern. But even more typical are the kitchen gardens which surround most Badaga hamlets and villages.

Kitchen garden plots are usually protected by ditches, barbed wire fences, horizontal pole fences, piled brushwood, piled earth walls, piled stone walls, or planted shrub rows (Yucca sp., for example). Plots are usually small, a wide variety of plants are grown, seed may be sown or planted, tubers are planted, and intercropping is common. The agricultural cycle controlling planting, sowing, and harvesting in kitchen gardens generally corresponds with the dry fields agricultural cycle. Thus, plants are grown in kitchen gardens during a main agricultural season (karbokam) and a lesser agricultural season (kadaibokam). The varying personalities of cultivators are reflected in the different crops and crop combinations occuring in plots (Figures 19 and 20). Alternate planting of kidney beans (Phaseolus vulgaris L.) and potatoes on paralleled ridges is a popular practice. Frequently, paralleled but more widely separated intersecting cross-

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241 and yam (compare with Table II).

Flowers and leaves of fishtail palms are used for ornamental purposes. Badagas also grow bananas in single layer gardens. After 245 cutting off stems laden with green bananas, Badagas and Paniyas place them in banana pits with pots in which green wood is burned (Figure 23). The heat and smoke within pits sealed with planks and mud cause bananas to ripen rapidly in two or three days. Leaves from planted amaranth are the only parts eaten. Badagas also eat leaves plucked 222 262 from wild amaranths (Amaranthus gracilis Desf., A. spinosus L.) 137 commonly growing in gardens. Leaves and roots of planted taro are edible. However, only the leaves cut from wild taro (Colocasia antiquorum Schott) growing next to streams and in gardens are eaten. 241 Ceara rubber plants (Manihot glaziovii Muell. Arg.) descended from stock used in experimental rubber production on adjacent plantations are now weeds occasionally left growing in gardens. Brinjal and chili seeds are first sprouted in a small nursery on stilts (Figure 23). Both plants are also planted in kitchen gardens with parallel earthen ridges. At Mundhatti, in 1963, there was a ridged kitchen garden with alternated kidney beans, brinjals, chilies, and maize. Elephant foot yam or taro are occasionally grown on ridges within single layer shaded gardens (Plate XII, F). Tapioca is increasingly being cultivated as a dry field crop planted on hoed ridges, but is not a typical Badaga crop.

243 Dry field agriculture. As upland dry fields are often left fallow, only small acreages are covered with crops at any single time.